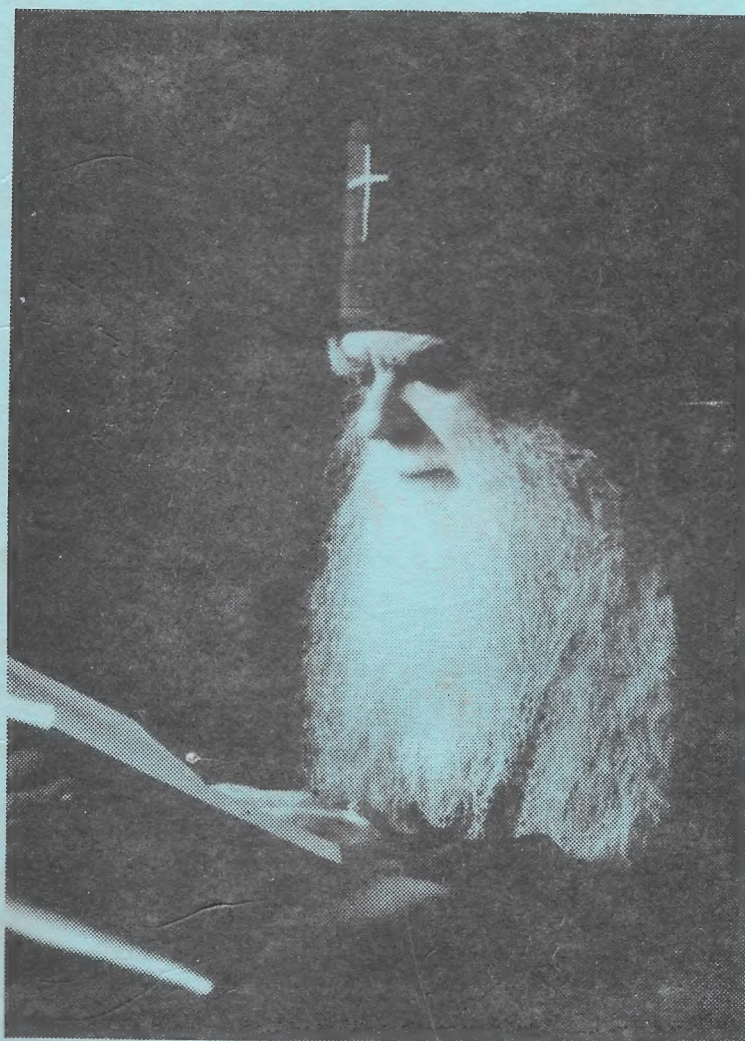


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The Life and Works of Archbishop Averky



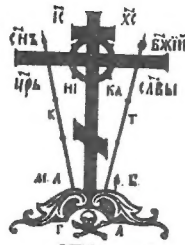
by Father Demetrios Serfes, Priest



The Life And Works Of
Archbishop Averky

Compiled by
Father Demetrios Serfes, Priest

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA



IN MEMORY OF THE BLESSED REPOSE OF
ARCHBISHOP A V E R K Y
OF SYRACUSE AND HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY
31ST MARCH/ 13TH APRIL, 1976



Forward

Often we read many writings from the Holy Fathers and the Saints of our Orthodox Church in which they very often give to us a spiritual uplift, and now today in the twentieth century another great writer of our Holy Orthodox Church has given to us that same spiritual uplift — Archbishop Averky.

The Life and Works of Archbishop Averky is dedicated to the First Anniversary of Vladika Averkys blessed repose: 31st March/13 April, 1976.

During these last times we can find very few outstanding defenders of our Orthodox Christian Faith. This century has indeed scandalized us with a time of great apostasy against Holy Orthodoxy, a time of unfaithfulness and the renunciation of truth, a time of compromise for the sake of modernism, and finally a time of less sacrifice for the love of God as well as His Church.

From reading the life and works of this great hierarch, we can sense a new hope and a sense of direction for the sake of our Holy Orthodox Faith. At the same time we can grasp the profound love and dedication that Vladika Averky had for the Orthodox Church, and his concern for those who followed the faith. As an Abbot of a Monastery and as a Archbishop of the Church Vladika not only lived the Holy Orthodox Faith, but he also practiced it, lived it, and preached it quite well, in order to bring us closer to God and at the same time help us strive for our eternal salvation.

As Orthodox Christians let us not forget to pray for Archbishop Averky. Let us also not only just read his life and works, but live them as well as he did.

Holy Pascha, 1977
Father Demetrios Serfes, Priest

GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS

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THE LIFE OF HIS EMINENCE
ARCHBISHOP AVERKY
OF SYRACUSE AND HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY

.1.

by Priestmonk Ignatius

"It only remains, for the Great Basil, who always suggested to me many topics for my sermons, to offer himself at present as the subject for the preacher." With these words St. Gregory the Theologian begins his eulogy, delivered in the fourth century over the grave of his close friend the tireless preacher and defender of the Orthodox Faith, St. Basil the Great. These words of St. Gregory are wholly applicable to our hierarch Averky Archbishop of Syracuse and Holy Trinity, deceased in the Lord March 31 / April 13. Who thus, besides Vladika Averky, up to his very death, so edified his flock from the ambo with such inspiring sermons! And what need be said of his edifying articles which appeared in our bi-weekly publication "Orthodox Russia"? We know that his words were read and re-read not only by our individual subscribers, but often by our clergy from the ambos of their churches. Thus, Vladika Averky's sermons resounded through the whole of our Russian diaspora, and even at times penetrated behind the iron curtain.

And so he sleeps the sleep of death until the general resurrection; he who taught all of us who were willing to listen and read his words, now offers himself as the subject for an edifying discourse.

The Childhood Years of Vladika Averky

His Eminence Archbishop Averky, (in the world known as Alexander Pavlovich Taushev), was born on October 19, 1906 (old style), in the city of Kazan, Simbirsk Province, into the noble family of Paul Sergievich Taushev and his wife Maria Vladimirovna. Vladika Averky's father having finished his studies at the Military-Judicial Academy in St. Petersburg, served in the military-judicial branch of the government until the Revolution of 1917. "The demands of my father's job," recalled Vladika about his childhood,* "were such as to require constant traveling throughout Russia and I thank the Lord that although I had to leave my beloved homeland early in life (1920), I will never forget my visit to the sacred Kremlin, "the heart of Russia." In the high altar of Moscow, with her holy places, beginning with the Cathedral of the Dormition where our emperors were crowned and the primates of the Russian Church were enthroned; Trinity-Sergius; the Lavra of the Kiev Caves; the Lavra of St. Alexander Nevsky with its cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, Kazan Cathedral and the Cathedral of St. Isaac and the Church of the Saviour-on-the-Blood in St. Petersburg. I do not believe that these now are of value only as museums and that the unity of Church and people which was there keystone will not be revived."

Reading was a favorite pastime of the young Alexander. He read every child's book available, as well as Pushkin, Gogol and Lermontov. "But what interested me the most," recalled Vladika, "were the books located in a huge cupboard in my father's study. Once my father had left for work, I loved to get into it and I was most fascinated by an enormous Russian Bible, lavishly illustrated by Gustav Dore which left a strong impression on me. Then with great delight I read A Guide to the Holy Land and A Guide to Mount Athos. My parents were not particularly Church-minded people, but were of deep religious convictions. My father being very fond of, often sent for books of a spiritual nature printed by St. Panteleimon's Monastery on the Holy Mountain, Athos. Once in possession of these books I was

* The information about his childhood and Vladika's stay in Bulgaria has been taken from his Recollections.

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enthralled not only by their contents by the sweet fragrance they emitted. Reading these books I simply revelled in this wonderful aroma and I was grieved when the time came to me to replace them in the cupboard. In this way I gradually became acquainted with Unseen Warfare which left a vivid impression on me as well as the book What is the Spiritual Life and How to Attain It, by Bishop Theophan the Recluse, along with a collection of the bishop's letters. I was every thereafter influenced by what I read and more began to shun the ordinary worldly life that surrounded me. But I still did not feel in those early years any special attraction to the Church and I did not know or understand then our wonderful and incomparable divine services. That came later, gradually. In my soul, even then however, when I was seven or eight, the desire to lead a monastic life subconsciously was maturing; a life of renunciation of the usual worldly ways which somehow alienated me from itself and in which I could see nothing attractive."

In 1914 the First World War broke out bringing Russia to a terrible bloody catastrophe. "The whole of life abruptly changed. An enormous upsurge of patriotism was felt everywhere. In all places, not only in the streets and institutions but in every individual family, could be heard talk about the war and the most intensive preparations of it. I remember in our family all the women were engaged in sewing, knitting and sending parcels for our soldiers at the front, in which they put everything which might comfort, cheer up and strengthen them in their struggle for defence of the Fatherland against the enemy, beginning with crosses and icons to wear, amulets with the text of the 90th Psalm, 'He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High,' knitted socks and sweaters, underwear and finally, sweets and tobacco. In the churches molebens were constantly being said for those departing for the front and for the gift of victory for our 'Christian forces.' There was a display of patriotism with the singing of our wonderful national anthem 'God Save the Tsar'-everything that happened then, clearly testified to the unusual national patriotic upsurge, and it was not possible to imagine even what would take place some three years later."

A lasting impression was made on our deceased Vladika by the Emperor Nicholas II with the Tsarevich on their visit to Lvov (Galicia) where Vladika's father was working. "It was the only time in my life that I saw our most pious Emperor and his son and moreover, from a rather close distance. What general delight the appearance of the Emperor and the Heir aroused! What unceasing 'hurrahs' thundered through the immense square where the troops were lined up!"

After the abdication of the Emperor, events became more and more menacing. Dark clouds gathered over Russia. Anarchy turned into full devastation and lawlessness. After countless tribulations endured throughout Russia in the years of the Revolution the Taushev family, in the beginning of 1920, left their homeland. "I remember," Vladika wrote concerning this sad moment in his life, "what grief gripped my heart when we left Russian soil, even notwithstanding that we were fleeing from obvious mortal danger had we remained and fallen into the hands of these monsters, for whom nothing was sacred. With sinking hearts we watched the last Russian lights disappearing over the horizon. Farewell, our hapless, much-suffering Homeland! Could it really be forever?!"

THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY

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Student Years in Bulgaria

The end of January, 1920, saw Alexander and his parents newly arrived at their destination, the large Bulgarian port-city of Varna. All incoming refugees were accommodated by the city authorities in hostels. There was soon opened here a Russian secondary school in which 250 students were enrolled, amongst whom was Alexander Taushev. "I recall the years of my studies at the gymnasium—from 1920 to 1926—with a most gratifying feeling. I very much loved to study and it was a real delight for me when we began to study of some new subject. I especially liked history and geography as well as the history of Russian literature. At one time I even took a great interest in Latin. Unfortunately, catechism was studied somewhat casually, and these lessons left few traces. A spiritual and Church frame of mind had taken a strong hold on me for which I am indebted primarily to our Varna church and the priest Fr. John Slunin. I will not forget them as long as I live, for never after have I met or experienced anything similar. And even now I live only by these sacred memories and I find in them the courage to bear all afflictions."

One year before he finished the gymnasium, an event took place which once and for all confirmed in Alexander his decision to enter upon a monastic way of life and be tonsured a monk. In the summer of 1925, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Pereyaslav came to Varna from Yugoslavia. "I remember," Vladika wrote, "how his unusual outward appearance deeply affected me; he was unlike any other hierarch that I had seen before. His prayerful way of serving and wonderful sermons inspired me with the spirit of the works of the ancient Church Fathers, the reading of whom enthralled me. Then suddenly, I learned that he had rented a summer house for the season five kilometers from the city and would spend every summer there, coming from Sophia, where he had taken up residence in the building belonging to the Bulgarian Synod. Some special, lofty spiritual joy filled my heart in the hope that I could often see this holy hierarch of God who had so struck me with his spirituality, and perhaps even talk with him. Immediately there came into my head the daring idea to ask him whether he would be my 'starets'—my spiritual father in monasticism which I had firmly decided to enter upon, since I saw in Vladika Theophan the ideal of a monk and holy hierarch that had long before taken shape in my mind and heart. And thus, that most fortunate day finally came when, having sought an audience with Vladika Theophan through a priest, I went to his summer house. It is difficult for me to express in words what I felt at my first meeting with this great hierarch. He inspired in me an unusual spiritual peace and such a fragrance of genuine holiness, which I have never encountered anywhere since... This meeting with Vladika Theophan firmly determined my future destiny: I steadfastly, without the slightest hesitation or doubt, resolved to undertake the monastic way of life."

Having finished the gymnasium, (high school) earning a gold medal, Alexander, with the blessing of Vladika Theophan, entered the Theological Faculty of the Royal University of Sophia. "On July 3rd, 1930, finally, having successfully passed all the prescribed examinations, I received the diploma with a 5 average, or magna cum laude, that is with the highest marks. What was I to do next? I could have obtained some position in the Bulgarian Church; but I wanted to be a monk and serve our Russian Church in particular and labor in the spiritual vineyard for our own Russian people. I subscribed to a Church newspaper 'Orthodox Carpatho-Russia' and I formed the

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the intention of setting out for Carpatho-Russia - at that time it was Czechoslovakia, where masses of Russian people were spontaneously returning to their own Orthodox Faith after an enslavement and oppression of many centuries of being cut off from Mother Russia and coerced forcibly by their enemies into a union with the Pope of Rome. Archbishop Theophan approved of and blessed my intention and even gave me a sum of money for the road, since neither I nor my parents had the money to buy the train ticket. From Carpatho-Russia, in reply to my letter, I received notification over the signature of the ruling Bishop Iosif that I would enter into the service of the Mukachevo-Presove Orthodox Diocese as assistant secretary to the Diocesan Administrator in the city of Hуста."

Missionary Activity in Europe

The young Alexander left Bulgaria with mixed feelings. "On the one hand," Vladika wrote, "sadness at parting from my beloved abba (Archbishop Theophan) and my parents whom I loved very much; on the other, joy that one way or another, with the blessing of my abba, I would come near to the realization of my cherished dream - becoming a monk, and moreover, on Russian soil which even officially bore a name that enticed me - Carpatho-Russia. The thought that I would be devoting myself to such a lofty missionary service as the return of our deceived and oppressed brothers in faith and blood to their own original Orthodox Faith - to the bosom of holy Orthodoxy - caused me joy."

Soon after Alexander Taushev's arrival in Carpatho-Russia, on May 17, 1931, he was tonsured a monk in the monastery of St. Nicholas, near the village of Iza, in the district of Hуста, and given the new name of Averky, in honour of St. Abercius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Bishop of Hieropolis. On the following day, the newly tonsured monk was ordained deacon by Iosif, Bishop of Bitol.



St. Abercius, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Bishop of Hieropolis.
The patron Saint of Archbishop Averky.

THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY

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In the following year, on the feast of the Annunciation, in the Devichy Monastery Dumboky, near Cherlenez, in the district Mukachev, hierodeacon Averky was ordained priestmonk. The ordination was performed by Bishop Damascene of Mukachev-Presov. In June of the same year, priestmonk Averky was transferred to the Monastery of St. Nicholas, to serve the parishes of Nankov and Bornava and to assist the abbot of the monastery, Archimandrite Matthew. In September he was appointed assistant dean of the parish in Uzhgorod. On the death of the dean of the parish, Fr. Averky undertook to fulfill the duties of dean. At the behest of Bishop Damascene, on August 7, 1935, priestmonk Averky was appointed editor-in-chief and publisher of the diocesan periodical "Orthodox Carpatho-Russian Herald" and after a year, teacher of catechism in the secondary schools at Uzhgorod.

On Pascha, 1937 Father Averky was elevated to the rank of abbot. In the same year he was made a member of the sacerdotal committee. In December, 1938, Abbot Averky was appointed dean of the parish in Mukachev and administrator of the Mukachev-Presov Diocese in the kingdom of Hungary. At the same time he was charged with managing the archiepiscopal residence and all the diocesan property that remained in Mukachev. On April 27, 1939, Father Averky was appointed first referent of the diocesan administration.

When he was forced to leave Carpatho-Russia after its occupation by the Magyars and arriving in Belgrade in 1940, as he was in the service of the First Hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anatassy, Fr. Averky taught Pastoral Theology and Homiletics to the Pastoral-Missionary School and conducted a systematic course of lectures at the Russian House for all those interested in questions on the spiritual life based on the teachings of the Church Fathers. In the capacity of chairman of the educational section of the Belgrade Parish Council, he periodically arranged religious instruction meetings, like "The Day of Russian Glory" in memory of the Enlightener of Russia, Equal-to-the Apostles, St. Vladimir; anniversary meetings in memory of St. Nicholas reposed 1600 years before and Bishop Theophan the Recluse, 50 years reposed, and others.

Living in Belgrade and later in Austria, Vladika had to endure all the horrors of the Second World War. Throughout these terrible years the only consolation for Fr. Averky was the custody of an object of great holiness-the wonder-working Kursk Icon of the Sign, which was then and remains the vessel of innumerable miracles.

In 1945 he arrived in Munich, Germany, together with the Synod of Bishops and for six years taught religion to the senior classes of two secondary schools - that of the Good Samaritan in Munich and that for the stateless in a refugee camp and also to the classes of nurses in the House of the Good Samaritan. At the same time, in the Synod headquarters, he conducted a systematic course of study in the works of the early Church Fathers. Many times he gave talks on scientific-theological and spiritual-ethical themes to groups of young people and in various refugee camps.

Missionary Activity in America

Appointed in 1950 by the Synod of Bishops to be chairman of their Missionary-Educational Committee, at the beginning of 1951 Archimandrite Averky came to America and was invited by Archbishop Vitaly to Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary to teach New Testament, Liturgics and Homiletics.

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At that time, Vladika recalled, "the first years of our being in America, there was still great general enthusiasm: the key was our church life, new parishes sprang up, churches were built, religious-educational and church-philanthropic organizations were founded, like the St. Vladimir Youth Society, the Foundation in the name of the ever-memorable Fr. John of Kronstadt (this was still before his canonization); often there were arranged, here and there, conferences and crowded church festivals; there existed an enormous religious fervor among the masses of faithful who found there a calm, peaceful and more or less secure existence and most zealously attended church."

Vladika Averky, who was still an archimandrite but later was consecrated bishop, undertook great, laborious and energetic work; as he had done in Europe, so now he did in the U.S.A in the capacity of spiritual guide of the societies of the St. Vladimir Youth. With what aims were these societies set up?

"To help our Russian youth work out for themselves a correct Orthodox and Russian world-view, so that it would become the guiding principle of their lives-this is the aim of our St. Vladimir Youth Clubs," Vladika stated at one of the St. Vladimir conferences. "We want to help you guard yourselves from the corrupting, destructive powers of sin which strongly threaten you in this country, abounding in material blessings, but at the same time in every temptation, and to reinforce in your souls those high ideals by which our native land lived through the course of many centuries. We want you to be worthy spiritual children of our common spiritual father and enlightener, St. Vladimir-the beautiful sun. We want to see you as bearers of that spiritual light, peace and joy which always radiated from our pious strugglers in the spiritual life: beginning with Prince St. Vladimir himself and his martyr sons Boris and Gleb, 'those marvellous blossoms of the newly baptized Russian land,' in the words of a chronicler, and extending to the last canonized saint, closest in time to us, Seraphim of Sarov. He who was always like the sun, beaming with unearthly joy, greeting those who came to him with the words, 'Christ has risen, my joy!' We want not only that you do not get lost, disintegrate and sink in the sea of heterodoxy that surrounds you, but that you yourselves be lamps of the true Faith and unhypocritical Christian piety, in order that those of other faiths, by looking at you, may glorify the Orthodox Faith as the undoubtedly original faith of Christ. This is not an idle dream. We know countless foreigners who were fascinated by the lofty beauty of the Orthodox Russian soul and became ardent admirers of Russian Orthodox culture. And how many of them with great earnestness became Orthodox and as it is customarily expressed, became quite 'Russified'-became utterly Russian. We also want the power of your Russian Orthodox soul always to overcome every foreign, heterodox, noxious influence and temptation. We sincerely want this for you. But to accomplish all this in fact, to a greater or lesser extent, depends, of course, on you yourselves. You must fully realize that you are genuine Russian Orthodox people and you must love with your whole soul this lofty centuries-old ideal of the Russian people."

From these young people who passed through the hands of Vladika Averky, some (the young men) became priests, sub-deacons, church choir

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directors, and others (the young women) became companions in life of those who served the Church or staunch Russian Orthodox teachers in their own families.

On February 17, 1952, Archimandrite Averky, by a decision of the Synod, was confirmed in the position of Rector of Holy Trinity Seminary which he held until his death.

During the twenty-four years that Archbishop Aveky occupied this post, the Seminary produced for our Russian Church Abroad approximately one hundred priests, who succeeded our old pastors as they departed for eternal life.

On May 10, 1953, Archimandrite Averky was nominated to be bishop of Syracuse-Holy Trinity, and was consecrated on the Day of the Holy Spirit.

Archimandrite Averky made these noteworthy remarks on the day of his nomination:

"So great is the seduction of sin at the present time, so corrupt is the understanding even of those who call themselves Christians, that there is nothing more difficult than to appeal to the ideal of saintliness, to the ideal of Christian perfection. At present, genuine faith in Christ endures persecution, perhaps even more dangerous and destructive than in the times of the first Christians. These persecutions are more severe than of the pagan era because then the Church was persecuted by people unacquainted with Christianity, while today she is persecuted by hardened apostates from Christianity who are conscious enemies of the Church, genuine servants of the coming antichrist. As never before, there are now appearing all sorts of false messiahs and false prophets. But what is more frightening is that in the bosom of the Church itself there arise more and more people who 'will come forward with a false message' (Acts 20:30) - individuals who have forsaken true Christianity, denying its essence, and who at the same time are not ashamed to hypocritically call themselves servants of the Faith and of Christ's Church.... For the contemporary pastor there arises the most responsible and important task - to teach the faithful to become familiar with the true Church amidst many false churches and in a word, by being filled with spiritual strength and wisdom, to maintain them in her bosom, and to attract those who are lost."

On May 12, 1960, at the completion of forty days from the repose of Archbishop Vitaly, at the general meeting of the monastery brotherhood that took place with the blessing of the Primate of the Church, Metropolitan Anastassy, Vladika Averky was elected Abbot of Holy Trinity Monastery. This difficult burden Vladika carried out until his own repose.

Archbishop Averky was the chairman of the St. John of Kronstadt Foundation centered at the memorial church in Utica, directing help to the needy and actively participating in the publication of the "Information Bulletin" of this Foundation.

In 1961 Bishop Averky was elevated to the rank of Archbishop. In addition to his basic duties as abbot, Vladika Averky did much pedagogical work in Holy Trinity Seminary and up to the last days of his earthly life he actively participated in the publication of "Orthodox Russia" (Vladika wrote his last article for it the day before his repose), printing in almost every number his archpastoral instructions of religious-moral edification.

As the legacy of his pastoral work, Vladika Averky left several written works (in Russian):

THE LIFE OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY

1. A Handbook for Studies in the New Testament (in two volumes).
2. A Guide to Homiletics.
3. True Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World (a collection of articles and sermons).
4. Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Pereyaslav.
5. The Present Times in the Light of God's Word. Sermons and Speeches (in four volumes).

and numerous pamphlets on thico-religious topics.

In conclusion, we will quote from the foreword to Archbishop Averky's last book, just recently published.

"All the swiftly increasing spiritual devastation in all aspects of life could not fail to prompt us to an especially forceful and fiery preaching of the Word of God, devoid of concern for oneself and any useless philosophizing, with the sole purpose of showing what a truly catastrophic situation we and the contemporary world have lived to see, and where we should seek salvation. 'It would go hard with me indeed if I did not preach the gospel' (I Cor. 9:16) -in this way, we pastors, and especially archpastors, are taught by the Word of God. And finally as a result of all the emotional stress I endured over all that is taking place nowadays, I was beset (at least, that is what the doctors say) by several serious illnesses which almost took me away from this temporary earthly life, because I could not come to terms with everything happening around me and approach it indifferently. And thus far have not been able to fully regain my strength. But, I thank the All-Holy God for not denying me the strength and ability to preach by the spoken and written word that precept of faith and piety which all true pastors of Christ's Church are called to preach constantly; in which is contained the principal duty of their service, the more so in these terrible times of rampant apostasy, when many are afraid to raise their voices and prefer to be silent. But 'through silence God is betrayed' (St. Gregory the Theologian) and therefore, one is alarmed for these silent, frightened pastors, who prefer to be hierelings rather than pastors. But, the Apostle Paul taught pastors through his faithful disciple Timothy: 'Preach the word, dwelling upon it constantly, welcome or unwelcome, bring home wrongdoing, comfort the waverer, rebuke the sinner, with all the patience of a teacher' (2 Tim. 4:2). It is not for me to judge how I fulfilled this. I will be judged as we all will be, by the impartial God. But, I can say one thing: I did everything honestly, according to my conscience and without regard to personalities."



HOLY ZEAL

I am come to send fire on the earth,
and what will I, but that it be already kindled?

The chief thing in Christianity, according to the clear teaching of the Word of God, is the fire of Divine zeal, zeal for God and His glory—the holy zeal which alone is to inspire man in labors and struggles pleasing to God, and without which there is no authentic spiritual life and there is not and cannot be any true Christianity. Without this holy zeal Christians are "Christians" in name only: they only "have a name that they live," but in reality "they are dead," as was said to the holy Seer of Mysteries John (Apoc. 3:1). True spiritual zeal is expressed, first of all, in zeal for God's glory, which is taught us in the words of the Lord's Prayer which stand at its very beginning: Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Those who are zealous for God's glory themselves glorify God with their whole heart—both in thought and feeling, both by words and deeds and with their whole life—and naturally desire that all other people should glorify God also in the same way, and therefore they cannot, of course, endure with indifference when in their presence, in some way or other, the name of God is blasphemed or holy things and serve Him alone with all the power of their being, and they are ready to forget themselves all the way to sacrificing their very life in order to bring all men to the pleasing and the service of God. They cannot calmly listen to blasphemy, and therefore they cannot support communion with and have friendship with blasphemers and mockers of the Name of God and despisers of holy things.

A striking and extremely clear example of such fiery zeal of God's glory comes to us from the depths of antiquity of the Old Testament in a great Prophet of God, the flaming Elias, who grieved in soul when he saw the apostasy from God of his people, led by the impious King Ahab, who introduced into Israel the pagan worship of Baal in place of the true God.

I have been very jealous for the Lord God Almighty—thus did he exclaim many times, expressing his grief—because the children of Israel have forsaken Thee: they have dug down Thine altars, and have slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it. (3 Kings 19:10)

And behold, this holy zeal aroused him, by the power of the grace of God which reposed on him, as a chastisement of Israel which had apostatized from God, to "close heaven" (3 Kings 17:1; 18:42-45. James 5:17-18), so that there was neither rain nor dew for three years and six months.

This same zeal later aroused Elias to slay the false prophets and priests of Baal, after the miraculous descent of the fire from heaven on Mt. Carmel, so that these deceivers might no longer turn the sons of Israel away from the true worship of God (3 Kings 18:40).

By the power of the same Divine zeal, St. Elias brought down fire from heaven, which burned the captains and their fifties which had been sent by the king to seize him (4 Kings 1:9-14).

That all this was in reality holy zeal which was pleasing to God is testified to by the fact that the Holy Prophet Elias did not die the usual death of all men, but was miraculously raised up to heaven in a chariot of fire, as if signifying his authentically fiery zeal for God (4 Kings 2:10-12).

But even then, in the severe Old Testament, the Lord Himself showed to His true servant that one can have recourse to such severe measures only in extreme cases, for the Lord was not in the great and strong wind rending the mountains and crushing the rocks, and not in the earthquake, and not in the fire, but

HOLY ZEAL

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in the voice of a gentle breeze (3 Kings 19:11-12).

This is why, when James and John, who were especially fervent in their zeal for the glory of their Divine Teacher, wished to bring down fire from heaven, imitating the Holy Prophet Elias, so as to punish the Samaritan village to Jerusalem, the Lord forbade them to do this, saying: Ye know not of what spirit ye are, for the Son of Man came not to destroy the souls of men, but to save (Luke 9:51-56).

And nevertheless (let immoderate lovers of peace pay heed!), the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who said, Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart (Matt. 11:29), found it sometimes necessary to manifest great strictness and have recourse to severe measures, teaching us also by this very fact, that meekness and humility do not mean spinelessness and should not yield before manifest evil, and that a true Christian should be far from sugar-sweet sentimentality and should not step away in the face of evil which presumptuously raises its head, but should always be uncompromising towards evil, fighting with it by all measures and means available to him, in order decisively to cut off the spread and strengthening of evil among men.

Let us recall with what harsh accusatory words the Lord addressed the spiritual leaders of the Hebrew people, the scribes and Pharisees, condemning them for hypocrisy and lawlessness: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! and threatening them with God's judgment (Matt. 23:29).

And when words turned out to be insufficient, He applied action against the lawless ones in very deed. Thus, finding that in the Temple they were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and money-changers were sitting, when He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew (John 2:14-15; Matt. 21:12-13).

And we know many other examples from sacred and Church history when mere words of persuasion turned out to be insufficient, and in order to cut off evil it was necessary to have recourse to more severe measures and decisive acts.

But it is essential that in such cases there should really be in a person only pure and holy zeal for God's glory, without any admixture of self-love or any other strivings of human passions which only hide themselves behind a supposedly holy zeal for God!

In the history of the Church, the great hierarch of Christ Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, whose memory we celebrate on December 6th according to our Orthodox calendar, has become glorious by just such an authentically holy zeal, with a decisive irreconcilability towards evil. Who does not know this wondrous hierarch of Christ?

But once this great hierarch, so glorious for his mercy toward his neighbor, performed an act which disturbed many and continues to disturb them even now, even though its authenticity is witnessed by the Church tradition contained in our iconography and Divine services.

According to tradition, St. Nicholas took part in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which brought forth a condemnation of the heretic Arius, who denied the Divinity of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God. During the disputes which occurred in connection with this, St. Nicholas could not listen with indifference to the blasphemous speeches of the arrogant heretic Arius, possessed by pride, who demeaned the Divine dignity of the Son of God, and before the whole Council he struck him in the face with his hand. This evoked such a general consternation that the Fathers of the Council decreed that the bold hierarch be deprived of hierarchal rank. But in that very night they were made to understand by a wondrous vision: they saw how the Lord Jesus Christ gave St.

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Nicholas His Holy Gospel, and the Most Pure Mother of God placed upon his shoulders the episcopal omophorion. And they they understood that St. Nicholas was guided in his act not by any evil, passionately sinful motives, but solely by pure, holy zeal for God's glory. And they forgave the hierarch, abrogating their sentence against him.

By citing such a picturesque example, we do not in the least wish to say that every one of us can or should follow this example literally: for this one must be himself just as great a holy hierarch as St. Nicholas. But this should absolutely convince us that we do not dare to remain indifferent or be unconcerned about the manifestations of evil in the world, especially when the matter is one of God's glory, of our Holy Faith and Church. Here we must show ourselves to be completely uncompromising, and we do not dare enter into any sort of cunning compromises or any reconciliation, even purely outward, or into any kind whatever of agreement with evil. To our personal enemies, according to Christ's commandment, we must forgive everything, but with the enemies of God we cannot have peace! Friendship with the enemies of God makes us ourselves the enemies of God: this is a betrayal and treason towards God, under whatever well-seeming pretexts it might be done, and here no kind of cunning or skillful self-justification can help us!

It is interesting to note how displeasing this act of St. Nicholas is to all the contemporary consenters to evil, these propagandists of a false "Christian love" which is prepared to be reconciled not only with heretics, persecutors of the Faith and the Church, but even with the devil himself, in the name of "universal love" and "the union of all" -slogans which have become so fashionable in our days. For the sake of this, these consenters strive even to refute the very fact of the participation of St. Nicholas in the First Ecumenical Council, even though this fact is accepted by our Holy Church and therefore must be respected by all of us as reliable.

All of this happens, of course, because among contemporary people, even those who call themselves "Christians," there is no longer an authentic holy zeal for God and His glory, there is no zeal for Christ our Saviour, zeal for the Holy Church and for every holy thing of God. In place of this there prevails a lukewarm indifference, an indifferent attitude to everything except one's own earthly well-being, with a forgetfulness of the just judgment of God which unfailingly awaits all of us, and of the eternity which will be revealed after death.

And without this holy zeal, as we emphasized at the beginning, there is no true Christianity, no authentic spiritual life -life in Christ. That is why this has been replaced now by all kinds of cheap surrogates, at times quite low ones, which however often answer to the tastes and attitudes of contemporary man. And therefore such pseudo-Christians, skillfully converging up their spiritual emptiness by hypocrisy, often have great success in contemporary society, from which authentic spirituality has been rinsed out; while authentic zealots of God's glory are despised and persecuted as "difficult people," "intolerant fanatics," "people who are behind the times."

And this even now before our eyes is occurring the "winnowing": some will remain with Christ to the end, and some will easily and naturally join the camp of His opponent, Antichrist, especially when the hour of threatening trials will come for our faith, when precisely it will be necessary to show in all its fullness the whole power of our holy zeal, which is abhorred by many as "fanaticism."

But at the same time one should not forget that, besides true holy zeal, there is also a zeal without understanding -zeal which loses its value because of the absence in it of a most important Christian virtue: discernment, and therefore, in place of profit can bring harm.

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And there is likewise a false, lying zeal, behind the mask of which is concealed the foaming of ordinary human passions—most frequently pride, love of power and honour, and the interests of a party politics like that which plays the leading role in political struggles, and for which there can be no place in spiritual life, in public church life, but which unfortunately is often to be encountered in our time and is a chief instigator of every imaginable quarrel and disturbance in the Church, the managers and instigators of which often hide themselves behind some kind of supposed idealism but in reality pursue only their own personal aims, striving to please not God but their own self-concern, and being zealous not for God's glory but for their own glory and the glory of the colleagues and partisans of their party.

All of this, it goes without saying, is profoundly foreign to true holy zeal, hostile to it, is sinful and criminal, for it only compromises our Holy Faith and Church!

And so, the choice is before us: are we with Christ or Antichrist?

The time is near (Apoc. 22:10) —thus did even the holy Apostles warn us Christians. And if it was "near" then, in Apostolic times, how much "nearer" has it be ome now, in our ominous days of manifest apostasy from Christ and persecution against our Holy Faith and Church?!

And we firmly resolve in these fateful days to remain with Christ, not in words only but in deeds as well, it is absolutely indispensable right now, without putting it off, to break off every bond of friendship, every form of communion with the servants of the appraising Antichrist, who has enlisted so many of them in the contemporary world, under lying pretexts of "universal peace" and "prosperity"; and especially must one free oneself unconditionally from every subservience to them and dependence on them, even if this might be bound up with detriment to our earthly well-being or even with danger for our earthly life itself.

Eternity is more important than our brief existence on earth, and it is precisely for it that we must prepare ourselves!

And therefore, ONLY HOLY ZEAL FOR GOD, FOR CHRIST, without any admixture of any kind of slyness or ambiguous cunning POLITICS, must guide us in all deeds and actions.

Ortherwise, a stern sentence threatens us: Because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will vomit thee out of My mouth (Apoc. 3:16).

Be zealous, therefore, and repent! (Apoc. 3:19). Amen.





MOTHER OF MY LORD
(LUKE 1:43)

And he knew her not until she brought forth her first born son and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 1:25).

And whence is this to me, that the Mother of My Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43). Thus did the Righteous Elisabeth cry out with joy, when the Most Holy Virgin Mary came to her, as to her own relative, in order to share with her the joy of the Annunciation.

The Orthodox Church, following the centuries-old teaching which comes from the very first days of Christianity, therefore names of the Most Holy Virgin Mary the "Mother of the Lord" or the "Birth-giver of God" (Theotokos), and honours her in a sacred manner, as she herself prophesied by saying "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:48), confessing her to be Ever-Virgin, that is forever preserving her vow of virginity.

Is there a foundation for the teaching of the perpetual virginity of the All-Holy Virgin Mary in the Holy Scriptures?

There is -- and moreover it is very persuasive!

When the Archangel Gabriel brought her the glad tidings of her giving birth to a Son Who "shall be called the Son of the Highest", in astonishment she replied to him; "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:31-34).

Such an answer, so full of amazement at the announcement of the angel would have been completely meaningless if she had not given a vow to God to remain a virgin forever. The angel calmed her, explaining to her that her vow would not be broken for she would bear a Son in a supernatural way, without the participation of a man, by the over-shadowing of the Spirit of God.

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon Thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow Thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," he said to her (Luke 1:35).

These words of the Holy Scriptures already in and of themselves serve as a completely sufficient basis for the ages-old belief and teaching of the Christian Church that the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave a vow to God never to enter into wedlock, always sacredly preserving her virginity. Therefore, the Church honoured her from the very first centuries of its existence as the Ever-Virgin, calling her "thrice-wondrous Virgin": a virgin before birth-giving, a virgin in giving birth, and a virgin after giving birth.

But who, then, was Joseph, who in the Gospel is sometimes called "her husband" (eg. Matthew 1:19)? Was he not then her real husband?

Nowhere does it say in the Gospel that the Most Holy Virgin Mary was given in wedlock to Joseph, but it is only said that she was "betrothed" to him (Luke 1:27; 2:5). It is self-evident that for a young virgin to give the vow of virginity and live completely alone

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without a protector and defender is extremely difficult and dangerous. Therefore, formally, according to the Law, she was considered as the wife of Joseph, and this protected her from all attempts against the purity of her virginity. Betrothal, in those times as in others, was legally considered to be equal to marriage, although it was not a complete marriage and did not grant the man who was betrothed the right to enter entirely into the rights of a husband (Luke 1:27).

If Joseph the Betrothed had truly been her husband and not just her "betrothed", why would she have expressed such amazement to the archangel in reply to his announcing the birth from her of a son, and why would she ask: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34) Such an objection on her part would otherwise be completely incomprehensible and meaningless!

Therefore, it is surprising and simply blasphemous that the protestants and all numberless that grew from them should say that the Most Holy Virgin Mary, after the miraculous birth from her of the Son of God, supposedly became not only the legal but also the factual wife of Joseph and that she bore by him several sons and daughters.

In the Holy Scriptures there is no mention of the age of Joseph the Betrothed, but it would have been extremely strange to think that the priest of the Temple of Jerusalem, where the All-Holy Virgin Mary was brought up, would have betrothed her, with the purpose of preserving her virginity, to a young man, who had not yet been married, as is the tendency of thought, in agreement with their own aims, of the protestants and sectarians, in opposition to the tradition which has come down from deep antiquity, that Joseph was an elderly widower and already had from his first real and not just seeming marriage grown children, who in the eyes of those around, naturally, were considered the "son of Joseph" (cf. Luke 4:22; Matthew 13:55-56).

That the Gospel of St. Matthew states concerning Joseph and the All Holy Virgin: "He knew her not until she had brought forth her first born son: and he called his name Jesus (Matthew 1:25), does not mean that he afterwards "knew her" and lived with her as wife, a wife.

Entirely correct is the commentary of St. John Chrysostom that a righteous man such as Joseph (and that he was a righteous man is clear from Matthew 1:19), could not decide to know a virgin after she had in such a miraculous way -- through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit -- become the Mother of the Son of God Himself. And the same Chrysostom cites a whole series of places in the Holy Scripture where this word "until", which is the translation of the Greek "heos", has a meaning entirely opposite to the meaning attributed to it by the protestants and sectarians. "This word," he says "does not lay down limits beyond which the action did not continue, does not signify any allotted time. Thus, in the account of the book of Genesis of the universal flood, it is said "and the raven did not return to the ark until (heos) the water had receded from the earth" (Genesis 8:6), but it did not return even after this. Likewise, concerning God, the Scripture says: "even from everlasting to (heos) everlasting Thou art" (Ps. 89:2), but by this no limits are laid down. Likewise we also read in the 109th

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 Psalm; "The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My Right hand, until (heos) I make Thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Ps. 109:1), but even after the submission of His enemies, the Son of God sits at the right hand of God the Father. In Prophet Isaiah we read, "If rain or snow fall from heaven, it shall not return until (heos) it waters the earth" (Is. 55:10), but it is obvious that when it was watered the earth, the rain will not return. In the parable of the merciless debtor it is said, "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till (heos) he should pay all that was due unto him" (Matthew 18:34), ie. in essence forever, for how and with what could he pay his debt when he was in the hands of the tormentors? This word "heos" is used in the farewell of the Lord with His disciples: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto (heos) the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20); but this does not mean, as Blessed Theophylact rightly notes, that after the end of the age Christ will no longer be with us. No! It is precisely then that He will even more so be with us.

That the Evangelist Matthew states that the Most Holy Virgin Mary" brought forth her first born son" (Matthew 1:25) in no way gives rise to the thought that after Jesus she bore other children. "The first born son" is the name applied to Jesus here not because the All-Pure Virgin had other children after Him, but simply because He was the first, and, furthermore, the only one, born of her. In the Old Testament, as we know, God commanded to dedicate to Him "every first male", with no view whatsoever as to whether there would be other children after him or not (cf. Ex. 13:2; Num. 3:13).

So easily and simply do all these unfounded claims of the protestants and sectarians fall apart, when they deny with such vicious stubbornness the ancient teaching of the Christian Church concerning the Ever-Virgin Birthgiver of God! They do not even take the trouble to consider why the Lord Jesus Christ would entrust His Mother to His disciple John, during the Crucifixion, if she had had several of her own sons and daughters? Would none of them really have taken her in as a mother and cared for her?

What, then, is the reason for such a surprising and stubborn dislike on the part of the protestants and sectarians for the ancient teaching of the Christian Church concerning the Ever-Virgin Mother of God?

This reason is revealed quite simply: it is their general dislike for the ascetic labor of virginity!

The founder and inspirer of protestantism, Martin Luther himself, a Roman Catholic monk who had given the vow of virginity and not feeling himself capable of fulfilling vow, trampled on it by marrying a nun. And in order to justify himself he began the false teaching that for salvation no ascetic labors are necessary at all, but faith alone in Christ is by itself sufficient.

Yet this is in direct opposition to the Holy Scriptures, which the protestants claim as their only authority, although with complete freedom in its interpretation. It is sufficient to cite just one saying of the Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord, who in his catholic epistle states, that faith alone cannot save a person, for "the devils also believe and tremble (James 2:19), and —

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therefore "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

Concerning the vow of virginity, this vow is instituted by no one other than the by the Divine Virgin and Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, in His discourse with the disciples on marriage and virginity (Matt. 19: 3-12).

When the Lord spoke that marriage could not be dissolved except for the sake of adultery, the Apostles were disturbed and said, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry" (Matthew 19:10). Correcting such a light-minded statement by the disciples, the Lord confirmed that it is indeed "better not to marry", but at the same time stated that the preservation of chastity is an ascetic labor which all cannot bear. "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (Matthew 19:11), and thus He established virginity on the same moral height as the loftier and more perfect states of spiritual life. Further, the Lord compares the ascetic labor of virginity with voluntary eunuchs; words, which, of course, are not to be taken literally, in the coarse, physical sense, "and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matthew 19:12).

To make oneself a "eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" means to cut off completely carnal desire, to slay carnal lust and to decide to lead an unmarried, virginal life, for the sake of a more complete service to God and attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven.

"He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew 19:12). This means that no one is forced to the ascetic labor of virginity, but he who feels himself, with God's help, must do so.

This is clear and undeniable institution by Our Saviour Himself of the ascetic labor of virginity, which is so great and so pleasing before God. For this reason many thousands of Christian men and women honoured the loftiness of this ascetic labor and chose it for themselves, and throughout the entire history of the Church they have been glorified for the sanctity of their lives. It was only in the 16th century, that the protestants, in the person of Martin Luther, joined in attack against this Christian institution and, in their dislike for it, did not stop even at blasphemy against the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, denying her virginity and sacrilegiously recognizing her simply as another average woman, like all others who bear children from their husband, and they do not wish to glorify her in opposition to her prophesy, "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:48).

For this reason it is not surprising, and is even the logical conclusion, that the more extreme of the protestants came to the denial of the miraculous birth from her of the Son of God, as of a pure and undefiled virgin, and strive now to demonstrate that in the great prophesy of Isaiah concerning the birth of Emmanuel of a virgin, one should not read "virgin" but "young maiden" (Isaiah 7:14). Thus, step by step, they give in to the propaganda of the atheists, who do not recognize anything lofty or holy.

No one forbids protestants and sectarians from entering into legal matrimony, if they do not feel themselves capable of a virgin life, and to bear children. But why deny and blaspheme that which always over the ages has been sacred in the eyes of all true Christians.

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And now do they dare to lower and blaspheme the lofty virginity of the Most Pure and All-immaculate Virgin -- the Mother of Christ our God!

The voice of the Ecumenical Church of Christ unanimously pronounced upon them and all their sympathisers a terrible sentence, already in the ninth century, a sentence which has been included in the magnificently compunctionate Service of Orthodoxy:

"To all who dare to say that the All Pure Virgin Mary was not before giving birth, in giving birth, and after giving birth a Virgin- --anathema!"

And we glorify Her with the angelic doxology, "Rejoice, Thou full of grace, the Lord is with Thee! (Luke 1:28).

And for each of us Christians She is "the Mother of My Lord" (Luke 1:43).

Archbishop Averky



THE ENTRANCE OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE. THE MOTHER OF GOD.



WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

On the first Sunday of the Great Fast our Church celebrates the triumph of Orthodoxy, the victory of true Christian teachings over all perversions and distortions thereof—heresies and false teachings. On the second Sunday of the Great Fast it is as though this triumph of Orthodoxy is repeated and deepened in connection with the celebration of the memory of one of the greatest pillars of Orthodoxy, the hierarch Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, who by his grace-bearing eloquence and the example of his highly ascetic private life put to shame the teachers of falsehood who dared reject the very essence of Orthodoxy, the podvig of prayer and fasting, which enlightens the human mind with the light of grace and makes it a communicant of the divine glory.

Alas! How few people there are in our times, even among the educated, and at times even among contemporary "theologians" and those in the ranks of the clergy, who understand correctly what Orthodoxy is and wherein its essence lies. They approach this question in an utterly external, formal manner and resolve it too primitively, even naively, overlooking its depths completely and not at all seeing the fullness of its spiritual contents.

The superficial opinion of the majority notwithstanding, Orthodoxy is not merely another of the many "Christian confessions" now in existence, or as it is expressed here in American "denominations." Orthodoxy is the true, undistorted, unperverted by any human sophistry or invention, genuine teaching of Christ in all its purity and fullness—the teaching of faith and piety which is life according to the Faith.

Orthodoxy is not only the sum total of dogmas accepted as true in a purely formal manner. It is not only theory, but practice; it is not only right Faith, but a life which agrees in everything with this Faith. The true Orthodox Christian is not only he who thinks in an Orthodox manner, but who feels according to Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy, who strives to embody the true Orthodox teaching of Christ in his life.

"The words that I speak unto you are spirit and life" —thus the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples of His divine teaching (Jn 6:63). Consequently, the teaching of Christ is not only abstract theory merely, cut off from life, but spirit and life. Therefore, only he who thinks Orthodoxy, feels Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy can be considered Orthodox in actuality.

At the same time one must realize and remember that Orthodoxy is not only and always that which is officially called "Orthodox," for in our false and evil times the appearance everywhere of pseudo-Orthodoxy which raises its head and is established in the world is an extremely grievous but, regrettably, an already unquestionable fact. This false Orthodoxy strives fiercely to substitute itself for true Orthodoxy, as in his time Antichrist will strive to supplant and replace Christ with himself.

Orthodoxy is not merely some type of purely earthly organization which is headed by patriarchs, bishops and priests who hold the ministry in the Church which officially is called "Orthodox." Orthodoxy is the mystical "Body of Christ," the Head of which is Christ Himself (see Eph. 1:22-23 and Col. 1:18, 24 et seq.), and its composition includes not only priests but all who truly believe in Christ, who have entered in a lawful way through Holy Baptism into the Church He founded, those living upon the earth and those who have died in the Faith and piety.

The Orthodox Church is not any kind of "monopoly" or "business" of the clergy as think the ignorant and those alien to the spirit of the Church. It is not the patrimony of this or that hierarch or priest. It is the close-

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 knit spiritual union of all who truly believe in Christ, who strive in a holy manner to keep the commandments of Christ, with the sole aim of inheriting that eternal blessedness which Christ the Saviour has prepared for us, and if they sin out of weakness, they sincerely repent and strive "to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance" (Lk. 3:8).

The Church, it is true, may not be removed completely from the world, for people enter her who are still living on the earth, and therefore the "earthly" element in her composition and external organization is unavoidable, yet the less of this "earthly" element there is, the better it will be for her eternal goals. In any case this "earthly" element should not obscure or surpress the purely spiritual element—the matter of salvation of the soul unto eternal life—for the sake of which the Church was both founded and exists.

The first and fundamental criterion, which we may use as a guide to distinguish the True Church of Christ from the false Churches (of which there are now so many!), is the fact that it has preserved the Truth intact, undistorted by human sophistries, for according to the Word of God, "the Church is the pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim. 3:15), and therefore in her there can be no falsehood. Any which in its name officially proclaims or confirms any falsehood is already not the Church. Not only the higher servants of the Church, but the ranks of believing laymen must shun every falsehood, remembering the admonition of the Apostle: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Eph. 4:25), or "Lie not to one another" (Col. 3:9). Christians must always remember that according to the words of Christ the Saviour, lying is from the devil, who "is a liar, and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). And so, where there is falsehood there is not the True Orthodox Church of Christ! There is instead a false church which the holy visionary vividly and clearly depicted in his Apocalypse as "a great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev. 17:1-2).

Even in the Old Testament from the prophets of God we see that unfaithfulness to the True God frequently was represented by the image of adultery (see, for example, Ezek. 16:8-58, or 23:2-49). And it is terrifying for us not only to speak, but even to think that in our insane days we would have to observe not a few attempts to turn the very Church of Christ into a "brothel," —and this not only in the above figurative sense, but also in the literal sense of this word, when it is so easy to justify oneself, fornication and every impurity are not even considered sins! We saw an example of this in the so-called "Living Churchmen" and "renovationists" in our unfortunate homeland after the Revolution, and now in the person of all the contemporary "modernists" who strive to lighten the easy yoke of Christ (Matt. 11:30) for themselves and betray the entire ascetic structure of our Holy Church, legalizing every transgression and moral impurity. To speak here about Orthodoxy, of course, is in no way proper despite the fact that the dogmas of the Faith remain untouched and unharmed!

True Orthodoxy, on the other hand, is alien to every dead formalism. In it there is no blind adherence to the "letter of the law," for it is "spirit and life." Where, from an external and purely formal point of view, everything seems quite correct and strictly legal, this does not mean that it is so in reality. In Orthodoxy there can be no place for Jesuitical casuistry; the favorite dictum of worldly jurists cannot be applied: "One may not trample upon the law—one must go around it."

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Orthodoxy is the one and only Truth, the pure Truth, without any admixture or the least shadow of falsehood, lie, evil or fraud.

The most essential thing in Orthodoxy is the podvig of prayer and fasting which the Church particularly extols during the second week of the Great Fast as the double-edged "wondrous sword" by which we strike the enemies of our salvation—the dark demonic power. It is through this podvig that our soul is illumined with grace-bearing divine light, as teaches St. Gregory Palamas, who is triumphantly honored by the Holy Church on the second Sunday of the Great Fast. Glorifying his sacred memory, the Church calls this wondrous hierarch "the preacher of grace," "the beacon of the Light," "the preacher of the divine light," "an immovable pillar of the Church."

Christ the Saviour Himself stressed the great significance of the podvig of prayer and fasting when His disciples found themselves unable to cast out demons from an unfortunate boy who was possessed. He told them clearly, "This kind (of demon) goeth not out save by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21). Interpreting this passage in the gospel narrative, our great patristic theologian-ascetic, the hierarch Theophan the Recluse asks, "May we think that where there is no prayer and fasting, there is a demon already?" And he replies, "We may. Demons, when entering into a person do not always betray their entry, but hide themselves, secretly teaching their hosts every evil and to turn aside every good. That person may be convinced that he is doing everything himself, while he is only carrying out the will of his enemy. Only take up prayer and fasting and the enemy will immediately leave and will wait elsewhere for an opportunity to return; and he really will return if prayer and fasting are soon abandoned" (Thoughts for Each Day of the Year, pp. 245-246).

From this a direct conclusion may be reached: where fasting and prayer are disregarded, neglected or completely set aside, there is no trace of Orthodoxy—there is the domain of demons who treat man as their own pathetic toy.

Behold, therefore, where all contemporary "modernism" leads, which demands "reform" in our Orthodox Church! All these liberal free thinkers and their lackies, who strive to belittle the significance of prayer and fasting, however much they shout and proclaim their alleged faithfulness to the dogmatic teaching of our Orthodox Church, cannot be considered really Orthodox, and have shown themselves to be apostates from Orthodoxy.

We will always remember that by itself totally formal Orthodoxy has no goal if it does not have "spirit and life"—and the "spirit and life" of Orthodoxy are first and foremost in the podvig of prayer and fasting; moreover, the genuine fasting of which the Church teaches is understood in this instance to be abstinence in every aspect, and not merely declining to taste non-lenten foods.

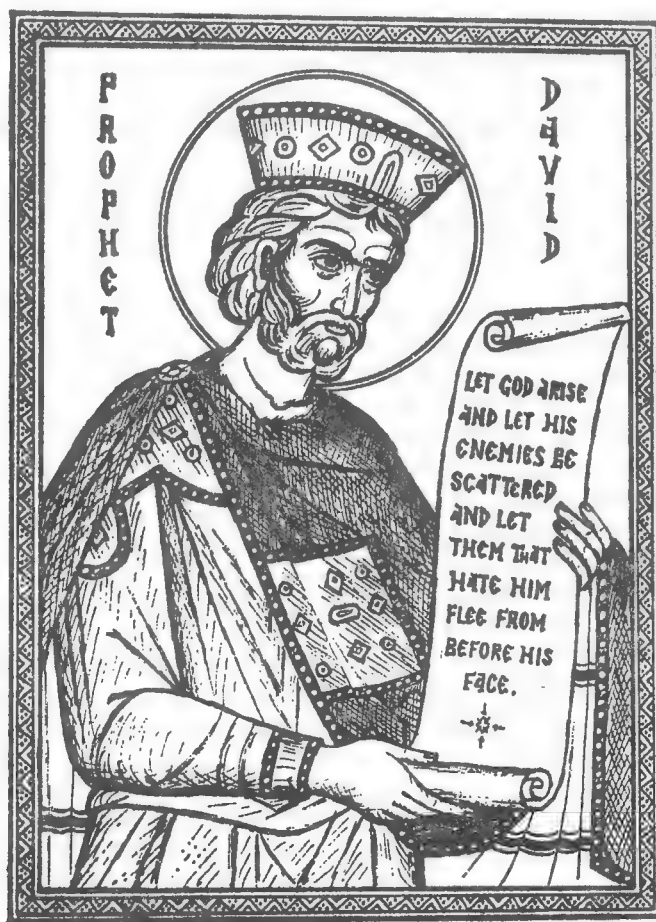
Without podvig there is altogether no true Christianity, that is to say, Orthodoxy. See what Christ, the First Ascetic, Himself clearly says: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). The true Christian, the Orthodox Christian, is only he who strives to emulate Christ in the bearing of the cross and is prepared to crucify himself in the Name of Christ. The holy Apostles clearly taught this. Thus the Apostle Peter writes: "If when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is accepted with God. For even here unto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an

WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

example, that we should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:2-21). In precisely the same way the holy Apostle Paul says repeatedly in his epistles that all true Christians must be ascetics, and the ascetic labor of the Christian consists of crucifying himself for the sake of Christ: "They that are Christians have crucified the flesh together with the passions and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). A favorite expression of St. Paul is that we must be crucified with Christ that we might rise with Him. He puts forth this thought in a variety of his sayings in many of his epistles.

You see, therefore, that one who loves only to spend time enjoying himself and does not think of self-denial and self-sacrifice, but continually wallows in every possible fleshly pleasure and delight is completely un-Orthodox, un-Christian. Concerning this the great ascetic of Christian antiquity, the Venerable Isaac the Syrian, taught well: "The way of God is a daily cross. No one ascends to heaven living coolly (i.e. comfortably, carefree, pleased with himself, without struggle). And of the cool path, we know where it ends" (Works, p. 158). This that "wide and broad way" which, in the words of the Lord Himself, "leadeth to destruction (Matt. 7:13).

This then is what is Orthodoxy, or True Christianity!



PASCHAL ENCYLICAL FOR THE RADIANT RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

To all the Faithful Children of the Syracuse-Trinity Diocese and Pious Pilgrims to the Holy Trinity Monastery.

What a marvelous and radiant joy, inexpressible for the human tongue, there is on this sacred and all-festive saving night of the Resurrection, "on which the Eternal Light bodily shone forth on all from the tomb."

All this is only for us the Orthodox.

In truth, "now all is filled with light, the heaven and the earth and the nether regions" and, according to the measure of our faith and love for the Lord, we now sense how together with us "all creation celebrates the rising of Christ, in which it is confirmed."

The sun itself, rising on this morning "of the purifying Pascha" dances with its rays in an extraordinary manner, as if greeting the "Sun of Righteousness" that has shone forth upon us from the tomb.

In an especially real way, our pious Orthodox Russian people sensed and relived this pure Paschal joy, which cannot be compared with anything earthly, after their fervent and diligent preparation for it by a lengthy, seven-week period of strick fasting. And all of its life, because of this, was transformed by grace, reflecting heavenly light.

And this is not surprising! For by His Radiant Resurrection, Christ "translated us from death to life and from the earth to heaven." And we cannot help but sing this victorious hymn from the heart, for on this light-bearing day we "celebrate the dying of death, the destruction of hell, the beginning of another, eternal, life."

From that moment, death, which is so grievous a fate for man, is no longer fearsome and morbid for us. For, as we Christians believe and as the Holy Church teaches us to pray on the great day of Pentecost, "there is no longer, O Lord, death for Thy servants, for when we depart from the body and pass on to Thee, our God, this is a translation from the most sorrowful to the most beneficial and sweetest, unto repose and joy."

And from this earth, burdened with many sins, sinking in numberless passions and ungodliness, becoming here already the entrance to hell, "Christ God has translated us to heaven."

And now "on this saving and radiant night", to all of us whose heart is not too hopelessly darkened and poisoned by sinful passion and desires, there is granted by the Risen Lord Himself a taste, as it were, of the first-fruit of that heavenly bliss of paradise, of which the Word of God teaches, "eye hath not seen or ear heard not that there entered unto the heart of men the things that God hath prepared for thos that Love Him (I. Cor. 2:9).

But, alas, how far the contemporary world has departed from this, becoming almost completely enslaved both physically and spiritually to the servants of satan, who are preparing for the reign of the enemy of our Risen Lord-the Antichrist!

And how urgently, therefore, satantic evil is rushing across the whole world, depriving helpless people of the radiant joy of the Resurrection and warping them into dumb cattle!!! And how drastically with each passing day, all of contemporary life changes for the worse; such hideous fruits of de-humanization are thus produced everywhere!

Su h a mad and fierce struggle is being waged now against Christ the Saviour and His faithful servants by these maddened satanists, striving in their blind wickedness to poison in the hearts of people the saving faith in His glorious Resurrection!

How much they have attained to here the so-called "free world, where

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the great event of the Resurrection of Christ is scarcely celebrated any-
more; and how much more in our helpless homeland, which formerly so mag-
nificently and solemnly celebrated the radiant day of the Lord's Pascha,
when the ringing of the bells reminded everyone of it, no matter who or
where he might be!

But there must be no place for despair for us before this sorrow-
ful spectacle of the widening spread of satantic evil everywhere. We know
all too well that the evil rejoicing of these servants of darkness and hell
will be short-lived; this is only a temporary victory for them, and at that
an imaginary one, only seeming to be such, for without faith in Christ and
His glorious Resurrection, there is nothing and no reason for people to
live!

Christ is Risen, and hell is already conquered; He delivered from
the power of the devil who sincerely believe on Him and the power of His
Resurrection. This is why the wonderful sermon of St. Chrysostom sounds
so joyful for us on the night of Pascha!

"Where is thy sting, O death? Where is thy victory, O hell?
Christ is Risen, and thou art cast down! Christ is Risen and the demons
are crushed. Christ is Risen and the angels rejoice. Christ is Risen and
life is abounding. Christ is Risen and there is not a single dead man in
the tomb.

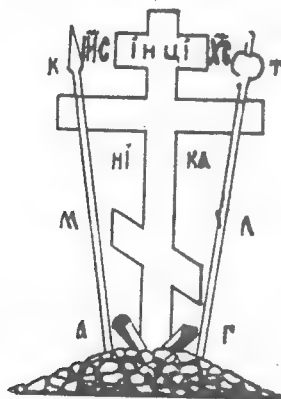
Christ is Risen—and we believe that our Homeland, defiled, dis-
graced, and crucified by the enemies of Christ, also shall rise again. Cer-
tain consoling signs of this can already be observed. And without the re-
surrection of homeland, Russia, which was the luminary of the true faith
of Christ for the whole world, there is no salvation for the rest of mankind
which has fallen away from Christ.

But one way or another, the final victory will be for the conqueror
of death and hell. And, perhaps, the hour is near when there will be ful-
filled the prophecy in the Divinely revealed Word of God:

"Lo, He cometh on the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory,
and every eye seeth Him and they also who persecuted Him, and before Him all
the nations of the earth shall lament and weep (Rev. 1:7 & Mat. 24:30).

Then shall begin the time of blessed eternity for all those who be-
lieved on Christ:—"For Christ being risen from the dead is become the first
fruit of the dead." "The dead shall arise and those in the tombs shall stand
up". To Him be the glory and dominion for ages of ages.

The Humble A V E R K Y,
Archbishop of Syracuse and
Holy Trinity Monastery.*



* This was the last Paschal Encyclical written by the Blessed Archbishop
Averky, it was delivered at Holy Trinity Monastery, and the Syracuse-
Trinity Diocese on Pascha 1976.

ARE THE TERMS "CHRISTIAN"
AND "ORTHODOX" ACCURATE
IN OUR TIMES?

Until recently, the concepts and terms "Christian" and "Orthodox" were unambiguous and meaningful. Now, however, we are living through times so terrible, so filled with falsehood and deception, that such concepts and terms are no longer convey what is significant when used without further clarification. They do not reflect the essence of things, but have become little more than deceptive labels.

Many societies and organizations now call themselves "Christian", although there is nothing Christian in them, insofar as they reject the principal dogma of Christianity—the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, as do several of the newest sects, to which the very spirit of true Christianity, which follows so naturally and logically from the teaching of the Gospels, is generally quite foreign.

Of late, the term "Orthodox" also has ceased in large measure to express what it should, for even those who in fact have apostatized from true Orthodoxy and become traitors to the Orthodox Faith and Church continue to call themselves "Orthodox".

Such are all the innovators, who reject the true spirit of Orthodoxy, all those who have started down the path of mutual relations with the enemies of Orthodoxy, who propagandize for common prayer and even liturgical communion with those who do not belong to the Holy Orthodox Church. Such are the "renovationists" ¹ and contemporary "neo-renovationists", the "neo-Orthodox" (as some of them openly style themselves!), who are clamoring about how essential it is to "renew the Orthodox Church", about some sort of "reforms in Orthodoxy", which allegedly has become "set in its ways" and "moribund". They harp on such things instead of focusing their prayerful attention on the truly essential renewal of their own souls and the fundamental reform of their own sinful nature with its passions and desires.

They insistently proclaim union with heretics, with non-Orthodox, and even with non-Christians. They proclaim "the union of all", but without the unity of spirit and truth which alone makes such union possible.

Such, for example, in our days are the Ecumenical Patriarchs of Constantinople, who in the past recognized the "Living Church" in Soviet Russia as legal and now recognize the Pope of Rome as the "head of the whole Christian Church", and even admit the papist Latins to Holy Communion without their first being united to the Holy Orthodox Church.

Such are all those who actively participate in the so-called Ecumenical Movement, which is striving so blatantly to create some sort of new pseudo-church out of all the denominations now existing.

Such, too, are those many others who are not completely faithful to our Lord and Saviour and His Holy Church, but serve His vicious enemies or please them in one way or another by helping them to realize their anti-Christian goals in a world which has turned away from God.

Who will dare to deny us our lawful right not to recognize such people as Orthodox, even though they may persist in using that name and in bearing various high ranks and titles?

From church history we know that there have been not a few heretics and even heresiarchs of high rank who were solemnly condemned by the Universal Church and removed from their offices.

But what do we see today?

¹. The name of members of the "Living Church" movement, sponsored by the Bolsheviks in the 1920's (Trans.).

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This, sadly, is an age of unlimited concessions and sly collaboration, when even the most scandalous heretical actions or statements disturb hardly anyone. Very few react to this manifest apostasy from Orthodoxy as they should, and as for condemning these new heretics and apostates--there is no point in even thinking about it. Today everything is permitted for everyone and nothing is prohibited for anyone, except in cases where someone is personally hurt, offended and insulted when their own folly is pointed out. Oh, in such cases, this is unforgivable! Then threats make their appearance, based on those forgotten canons, which otherwise are "obsolete, outdated and unacceptable" in our advanced, progressive age!

The truth is readily ignored and brazenly flouted, while evil, just as readily, celebrates its triumphant victory and gloatingly mocks the truth which it has overthrown and trampled upon.

Is it possible to reconcile one's conscience to this contemporary situation?

Can one close one's eyes to all these lies and falsehoods and calmly act as if one saw nothing wrong?

Only individuals whose consciences are burned out or completely lost can do so! That is why it is more than strange to hear some, imagining themselves to be Orthodox, call the Russian Church Outside of Russia, "Old Believer", "schismatic", "Black Hundredist", 2 "retrograde", "obscurantist", and so on, simply because we will not walk in step with these times and dare not to apostatize in anything from Christ's Gospel and the original teaching of the Holy Church, and therefore consider it an obligation of conscience to condemn this clear and obvious evil of contemporary life which has already penetrated into the Church.

In fact, it is not we who are schismatic, but all those who follow the spirit of these times and by that act cut themselves off from the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, apostatizing from the apostolic faith, from the faith of the Fathers, from the Orthodox faith, which established the whole world... These people are obviously hurtling over the precipice of apostasy--into the abyss of perdition, together with the whole contemporary world, burying themselves in their apostasy from the life-creating God.

Do you hear the Apostle's divinely inspired words, modernists, attempting to distort Christ's Gospel and becoming so readily and zealously "conformed to this world", evil and alluring as it is?

We readily accept your indictment that we are "old believers", considering it an honor to our traditionalism; but now does your Christian conscience get on with your innovating, which overthrows essentially the ancient, true faith and Christ's unchanging Church?

Was it not the Apostle who warned all Christians:

"Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

We are "old believers", but not schismatics, for we have never cut ourselves off from the true Church of Christ.

We are in union with our Head, Christ the Saviour, with His holy Disciples and Apostles, with the Apostolic Fathers, with the great Fathers and Teachers of the Church, and with the great luminaries and pillars of the faith and piety of our Fatherland, Holy Russia. But you are in union with some sort of innovating, self-appointed teachers, whom you advertise everywhere so unlawfully and obstinately, disparaging and at times even daring to criticize the genuine luminaries of our Holy Church, who have pleased God and been glorified in many ascetic struggles of piety and miracles throughout the course of her two-thousand year history.

2. Literally, "black hundreders": the "black hundreds" were a patriotic, anti-revolutionary organization in pre-revolutionary Russia. Popular slander equates them with the irresponsible mobs that carried out pogroms. In fact the black hundreds were Church-sponsored and opposed to any sort of brutality.

ARE THE TERMS "CHRISTIAN" AND "ORTHODOX" ACCURATE IN OUR TIMES?

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This being the case, which of us is really the schismatic?

Of course it is not those in the spirit of traditional Orthodoxy, but those who have apostatized from the true faith of Christ and rejected the genuine spirit of Christian piety; even though all the contemporary patriarchs, who have altered our age-old, patristic Orthodoxy, may be on the latter's side, as well as the majority of contemporary, so-called Christians.

Indeed, Christ the Saviour did not promise eternal salvation to the majority, but quite to the contrary, He promised it to His "little flock", which will remain faithful to Him to the end, in the day of His Glorious and Terrible Second Coming, when He will come "to judge the living and the dead."

"Fear not, little flock," He said, painting the frightening picture of the last times of apostasy from God and persecution of the Faith before our mind's eye, "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Lk. 12:32).

This is why all we have said above prompts us to re-examine the terminology that has been accepted up to the present. It is insufficient in our time to say only "Christian" -now it is necessary to qualify this by saying "true-Christian". Similarly it is insufficient to say "Orthodox" -it is essential to emphasize that one is not referring to an innovating modernist "Orthodox", but to a true Orthodox.

All genuine zealots of the true faith, serving Christ the Saviour alone, have already begun to do this, both those in our Fatherland, enslaved by ferocious enemies of God, where zealots depart into the catacombs like the ancient Christians, as well as in Greece, our brother nation, where the "Old Calendarists" not only refuse to accept the new calendar, but also reject all innovations of any kind. They have a special veneration for that champion of Holy Orthodoxy, St. Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus, thanks to whose steadfastness the impious Union of Florence with papal Rome in 1439 failed. ³

In our firm stand for the true Faith and Church it is essential to avoid everything personal -pride and self-exaltation, which inevitably lead to new errors, and eventually even to a fall; we have already witnessed this in several cases. It is not ourselves we should praise, but the pure and immaculate Faith of Christ. No fanaticism is admissible here because it is capable of blinding the spiritual eyes of such who are "zealous not according to knowledge". Rather than confirming one in the Faith, this blind fanaticism can sometimes lead one away from it.

It is important to know and to remember that a true Orthodox Christian is not someone who just accepts the dogmas of Orthodoxy formally, but a person who, as our great Russian hierarch St. Tikhon of Zadonsk taught so beautifully, thinks in an Orthodox way, feels in an Orthodox way, and lives in an Orthodox way, incarnating the spirit of Orthodoxy in his life. This spirit-ascetic and world-renouncing, as is clearly set forth in the Word of God and the teachings of the Holy Fathers-is most sharply and boldly denied by the modernists, the "neo-Orthodox", who want in everything to keep in step with the spirit of this world lying in evil, whose prince, in the words of the Lord Himself, is none other than the devil (Jn. 12:31). Thus it is not God Whom they desire to please, but the "prince of this world", the devil; and thereby they cease to be true Orthodox Christians, even if they call themselves such.

If we consider all this more seriously and deeply, then we will see that this is precisely the case and that modernism with its innovations is leading us away from Christ and His true Church.

³. It is noteworthy that both the Catacomb Church in the USSR ("Tikhonites") and the Greek Old Calendarists, between whom there can hardly be any communication, have begun to call themselves "True Orthodox Christians".

ARE THE TERMS "CHRISTIAN" AND "ORTHODOX" ACCURATE IN OUR TIMES?

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Let us be horrified at how rapidly apostasy has proceeded, although the modernists do not see it or feel it, inasmuch as they themselves are taking an active part in it.

And so let us not fear to remain in the minority-far from all their high-sounding titles and ranks. Let us always remember that even Caiaphas was a high priest of the true God, and to what depths he sank-to the horrible sin of deicide!

While living in this world which has apostatized from God, let us strive not for specious human glory and cheap popularity, which will not save us, but only to be within Christ's "little flock".

Let us be True Orthodox Christians, not modernists!



St. Mark Metropolitan of Ephesus

THE TWENTY-SECOND COMMENCEMENT
OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX SEMINARY
15 JUNE 1969
ADDRESS OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY
RECTOR OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX SEMINARY

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

We have gathered here today to celebrate the completion of the twenty-second academic year of our Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary. A few more of her sons are receiving their diplomas of theology, and we hope that the years which they spent within the walls of the monastery and seminary will not be without influence on the rest of their life, that they will, in one capacity or another, in the future serve the great work of the Church of Christ on earth, which especially now is in such need of true and faithful servants.

We are filled with the greatest thankfulness of the Merciful Lord, Who still bestows His benefits upon us, in spite of the truly horrible things which are being done during our times in the world, and which, in the most recent times, have begun to occur in this land, which has given us refuge. I have in view the student disorders which especially remind us of what occurred in our helpless homeland before the revolution of 1917. And may the Lord keep this land from the bitter fate which overtook our homeland!

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (I Cor. 5:6), the word of God teaches us. And we would wish that our seminarians would be this "little leavening" which would bring about the healing spiritual beginning of true Christian faith in the contemporary world, which is perishing in its madness. We would wish that they, as true disciples of Christ, would be, according to the measure of their strength and abilities, "the light of the world," and the "salt of the earth," according to the words of Christ (Matt. 5:13-14). It is for this goal that we live and labor, training and teaching them.

This is not the first time that our graduation has coincided with the great day for the heart of every Orthodox Russian, the celebration of the memory of All the Saints Glorified in Russia. And this is very significant! This should remind our seminarians that they go through our seminary in order to cultivate within themselves the spirit of Holy Russia, which once was fragrant with holiness, and also in order to prepare themselves to be the restorers of this Holy Russia, now defiled and mocked by the devil, for without Holy Russia there will never be peace and prosperity in the whole world, and this world, in its entirety, will rapidly go to its end, of which Holy Writ clearly teaches us, and we already observe the clear signs of this in our times.

I sincerely greet all who gathered here for this, our modest celebration--both the monastic brotherhood, which by its labors gives the possibility for the existence of the Seminary within its walls, the fathers and professors who teach, so zealously and without thought of remuneration laboring at the task of training and teaching seminarians, and also the officials of the Department of Education, who are always so well disposed towards us; I also sincerely greet all our honored guests and pilgrims who have come to share with us in this our school's celebration.

My special greetings to our students, who are now receiving the diploma of Bachelor of Theology. Do not rejoice over the fact that you are receiving a document which will help you in arranging your life, but rejoice that you have communed at the unwaning source of Orthodox-Christian culture, that you have received at least the most basic theoretical knowledge for serving the Church of Christ, and you can, if you wish, enter on the path of the most important and greatest service in the world, the service of the pastorate. Do not force us to be disillusioned about you and to regret that we vainly spent our time and efforts and material resources for your training and education. But follow rather the

THE TWENTY-SECOND COMMENCEMENT OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX SEMINARY 15 JUNE 1969

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example of those who, after graduation from our seminary, now bear with honor the banner of pastoral service and console us with their good reputation among the flock entrusted to them. Our Church is in such need of good pastors now; become such, and in this the Lord Himself will undoubtedly help you, if only your striving will be to serve His holy work sincerely on the earth. And fear the condemnation of the lazy and evil servant of the Gospel parable who, on receiving the talent from his lord, buried it in the earth (Matt. 25:24-30).

Seminarians, who still have to continue your studies, do not waste the precious time which you are spending here. Remember that what you can obtain here for your spiritual training and education, you, perhaps, shall not receive at any other time or place. Attend the services in the monastery church as often as possible; take an active part in them by reading, singing, and serving in the Altar! Attend to the lessons given you with all diligence, regularly attending all the lectures of the professors and studying in your rooms, reading the necessary books and source materials. Remember that the usual frame of mind and merry pastimes of contemporary, decadent youth are in no way proper for you! You have come to a monastery in order to study in a theological school; conduct yourselves accordingly! And may God help you to obtain here that incorruptible wealth of the treasures of our Holy Orthodox Faith, which you will never again find in the contemporary, morally-decadent world.

All our dear guests and pilgrims! We seek your help, your cooperation in our great task of preparing new pastors for our Church. Help us, each one as best you can! Find truly worthy candidates for entering Seminary and send them to us. But, of course, we need persons sincerely dedicated to our Holy Faith and the Church; send us such as these, but not persons who have no serious interest in these things. If there will be no replenishing in our ranks, our Church can very soon come to be entirely without pastors. Help us! Be our co-workers!



St. Seraphim of Sarov

SERMON OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY DELIVERED ON
ORTHODOX SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1971 IN
HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY, NEW YORK

"This is the Apostolic faith, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the Orthodox faith -- confirm this universal faith."

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, you will hear these solemn and significant words in the Rite of Orthodoxy which the Holy Church has established to be served on this day.

The first week of Great Lent has ended -- a week of intensified prayer and ascetical repentance. Now the Holy Church, desiring to encourage and console us, has established for us in this first week of Great Lent, on its first Sunday, a spiritual celebration, one most dear and close to our hearts -- The Triumph of Orthodoxy.

This celebration was first performed in 842 in Constantinople in the presence of the Blessed Empress Theodora by His Holiness Patriarch Methodius in memory of the overthrow of the last terrible heresy to shake Christ's Church, the heresy of iconoclasm. But in this celebration the Holy Church marks the triumph of the holy Orthodox faith in general, her victory over all impious heresies, false teachings and schisms. Our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour founded His Church on earth so that all belonging to her could be saved, could elude the nets of the devil and enter into the Heavenly Kingdom prepared for them. The devil exerted all his strength to overthrow and destroy the Church of Christ and, through this, to hinder the salvation of men. At first he raised up terrible persecutions against the Church on the part of the Jews and pagans. For almost three centuries the blood of Christian martyrs flowed without ceasing. But the devil did not succeed in his task. The blood of the martyrs, according to the apt expression of the Christian apologist Tertullian, became the "seeds of Christians." Christianity triumphed over its persecutors. "The meek lambs of Christ's flock transformed the wolf-like rage of their persecutors into lamb-like meekness."

But the devil did not resist after the defeat he suffered at the hands of the martyrs. When the Church of Christ triumphed in the world, he raised up a new, even more dangerous persecution against her: from within the Church, as the Holy Apostle Paul had foretold in his conversation with the Ephesian presbyters, men arose "speaking perverse things." Paul called such men "grievous wolves." (Acts. 20:29-30) These were so-called "heretics" who tried to pervert the true teaching of Christ concerning faith and piety in order to make this teaching ineffective for men. When this happened, the Holy Church, in the person of its best servants, took up arms against these heretics in order to defend its true, undistorted teaching. There began to be convoked first "local" and then "ecumenical" councils. Bishops came together from all the corners of the earth and through the Holy Spirit they gave voice to the pure and undistorted Truth, following the example of the First Apostolic Council of Jerusalem (Acts. 15:6-29). They also cut off heretics from the Church and anathematized them. This was in accordance with the clear commandment of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself who said, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matthew 18:17) And in accordance with the commandment of the Holy Apostle Paul, that great "apostle to the nations" who said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8) And in another place he states: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maranatha." (I. Cor. 16:22)

SERMON OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY DELIVERED ON ORTHODOX SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1971 IN
HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY, NEW YORK

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Thus our moving, majestic and solemn Rite of Orthodoxy takes its beginning from our Lord and Saviour Himself and from his great Apostle, called by Him to be the "apostle to the nation", i.e. of the whole pagan world.

From the ninth century on the Holy Church has established that this rite should be served on the first Sunday of Great Lent and that it be name "Orthodox Sunday."

This rite, brothers and sisters, is particularly important and significant in the evil times we are experiencing, times in which the Orthodox faith is wavering and shaking. This wavering and shaking of the Orthodox faith is due to those very persons who ought to be strengthening and supporting it in the souls of the faithful. Those who should be pillars of Holy Orthodoxy--high-ranking hierarchs including the heads of certain Local Churches--are departing from the Truth of Holy Orthodoxy. It is terrible to have to say that even the head of the Constantinopolitan Church, which is known as the "Ecumenical" Church, the man considered to be the first hierarch of all Orthodoxy, has set out this path!

On all of this there undoubtedly lies the print of the Apostasy about which the Holy Apostle Paul foretold (II Thess. 2:3)--the apostasy of Christians from Christ.

We are now face to face with this Apostasy. The major threat to true Christian faith, the Orthodox faith, is the so-called "Ecumenical Movement," headed by what is known as the "World Council of Churches," a body which denies the doctrine of the unity and infallibility of the True Church of Christ and attempts to create from all the presently existing and distorted the faith, a new "false-Church" which, from our point of view, will without any doubt be the "Church" of Antichrist, that false-church which the Antichrist, whose coming is now being rapidly prepared in the world, will head.

From the teaching of the Word of God and the Holy Fathers of the Church we know that the Antichrist will be both the religious and political leader of all humanity: he will stand at the head of a new universal false-Church; he will also be the director of one new world government and will attempt to submit all to his absolute power.

The Orthodox faith--this is the "faith of the Apostles," "the faith of the Fathers"--it is that faith which was preached by the Holy Apostles, who laid its foundations in the Holy Gospels and in their apostolic epistles to the faithful. It is that faith which the Apostolic Fathers, the direct disciples of the Holy Apostles, and the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church and their lawful successors, established by the Holy Spirit, interpreted for us in their marvellous and inspired writings.

Brothers and sisters, we must hold this faith steadfastly if we desire eternal salvation!

Now we shall perform with you this deeply-instructive, moving and highly solemn rite which consists of two parts: the first part is the prayer of the Holy Church for all those who have gone astray or fallen away from the true Orthodox faith; in the second part the Holy Church pronounces dread anathema against all false teachers, heretics and schismatics who have grown stubborn in their malice and who do not wish to

SERMON OF ARCHBISHOP AVERKY DELIVERED ON ORTHODOX SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1971 IN
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reunite with the true Church of Christ but instead struggle against her. Then we shall sing "Eternal Memory" for all departed defenders of Holy Orthodoxy and "Many Years" for those defenders of the Holy Orthodox faith and Church who are still among the living. Amen.





SHOULD THE CHURCH BE
"IN STEP WITH THE TIMES?"

"Know that we must serve, not the times,
but God."

SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT
Letter to Dracontius

"In a time when under the name of Christianity, even Orthodox Christianity, every kind of compromise and surrogate is offered men whose spiritual hunger can be satisfied only by uncompromising Truth, the spiritual shepherds have become few who speak straightforwardly the saving word. Archbishop Averky, Abbot of Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York, and a leading hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, is one of those few. In the pages of the Russian religious newspaper published by the Monastery, Orthodox Russia, his voice is continually heard, calling for faithfulness to Holy Orthodoxy and warning of the impending judgement of God on this evil generation.*

IN STEP WITH THE TIMES! —Behold the watchword of all those who in our time so intensely strive to lead the Church of Christ away from Christ, to lead Orthodoxy away from true confession of the Orthodox Christian Faith. Perhaps this watchword does not always nor with everyone resound so loudly, clearly, and openly — this, after all, might push some away! The important thing is the practical following of this watchword in life, the striving in one way or another, in greater or lesser degree and measure, to put it into practice.

Against this fashionable, "modern" watchword, perilous to souls, however it may be proclaimed or however put into practice, openly or under cover, we cannot but fight — we who are faithful sons and representatives of the Russian Church Abroad, the whole essence of whose ideology, in the name of which it exists in the world, is not to be "in step with the times," but to preserve and unchanging faithfulness to Christ the Saviour, to the true Orthodox Christian Faith and Church.

Let us recall how the Blessed Metropolitan Anthony, founder and first head of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, in his remarkable essay, "How does the Orthodox Faith differ from the Western Confessions?" wrote concerning the profound difference in the fact that the Orthodox Faith teaches how to construct life according to the demands of Christian perfection, whereas heterodoxy takes from Christianity only those things which are, and to the degree to which they are, compatible with the conditions of contemporary cultural life. "Orthodoxy looks upon Christianity as the eternal foundation of true life and demands of everyone to force himself and life until they attain this standard; whereas heterodoxy looks upon the foundations of contemporary cultural life as an unshakable fact. Orthodoxy demands moral heroism — podvig; heterodoxy searches for what in Christianity would be useful to us in our present conditions of life. For Orthodox man, called to eternity beyond the grave, where true life begins, the historically-formed mechanism of contemporary life is an insubstantial phantom; whereas for the heterodox the teaching concerning the future life is a lofty, ennobling idea, an idea which helps one ever better to construct real life here."

These are golden words, indicating for us clearly and sharply the truly bottomless abyss that separates genuine Christian faith—Orthodoxy—

* From the Editors of Orthodox Word, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Hieromonk Herman, and Hierodeacon Seraphim.

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-from its mutilation — hetrodoxy! In the one is to be found ascetic labor (podvig), a turning to eternity; in the other, a strong attachment to the earth, a faith in the progress of mankind on earth.

Further, as Metropolitan Anthony so sharply and justly sets forth, "the Orthodox Faith is an ascetic faith," and "the blessed state which the worshippers of the 'superstition of progress' (to use the felicitous expression of S. A. Rachinsky) expect on earth, was promised by the Saviour in the future life; but neither the Latins nor the Protestants desire to reconcile themselves to this, for the simple reason — to speak frankly — that they poorly believe in the resurrection and strongly believe in happiness in the present life, which, on the contrary, the Apostles call a vapor that shall vanish away (James 4:14). This is why the pseudo-Christian West does not wish and is unable to understand the renunciation of this life by Christianity, which enjoins us to fight, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new man, that is renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. 3:9-10).

"If we investigate all the errors of the West," Vladika Anthony writes further, "both those which have entered into its doctrinal teaching and those present in its morals, we shall see that they are all rooted in a failure to understand Christianity as ascetic labor (podvig) involving the gradual self-perfection of man."

"Christianity is an ascetic religion," concludes this excellent, forcefully and perspicuously-written essay. "Christianity is a teaching of constant battling with the passions, of the means and conditions for the gradual assimilation of virtues. These conditions are both internal — ascetic labors — and given from without — our dogmatic beliefs and grace-bestowing sacramental actions, which have one purpose: to heal human sinfulness and raise us to perfection."

And what do we see now in contemporary "Orthodoxy" — the "Orthodoxy" that has entered into the so-called "Ecumenical Movement"? We see the complete negation of the above-cited holy truths; in other words: renunciation of true Orthodoxy in the interest of spiritual fusion with the heterodox West. The "Orthodoxy" that has placed itself on the path of "Ecumenism" thinks not of raising contemporary life, which is constantly declining with regard to religion and morals, to the level of the Gospel commandments and the demands of the Church, but rather of "adapting" the Church herself to the level of this declining life.

This path of actual renunciation of the very essence of Holy Orthodoxy — ascetic labor, for the purpose of uprooting the passions and implanting the virtues — was taken in their time by the partisans of the so-called "Living Church" or "Renovated Church". This movement immediately spread from Russia, which had been cast down into the dust by the ferocious atheists, to other Orthodox countries as well. Still fresh in our memory is the "Pan-Orthodox Congress" convened by Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV of sorry memory in 1923, at which were devised such "reforms" as a married episcopate, remarriage of priests, the abolition of monasticism and the fasts, abbreviation of Divine services, suppression of special dress for clergy, etc.

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Notwithstanding the collapse at that time of these impious designs, the dark powers were not, of course, pacified, and continued from that time their obstinant and perseverant activity, finding for themselves obedient tools in the ranks of the hierarchy of various Local Orthodox Churches. At the present time also, by the allowance of God, they have attained great success: almost all the Local Orthodox Churches have already entered into the "Ecumenical Movement," which has set as its purpose the abolition of all presently-existing churches — including, of course, the Orthodox Church — and the establishment of some kind of absolutely new "church," which will be completely "in steps with the times," having cast away as useless rags, as something "obsolete" and "behind the times," all the genuine foundations of true Christianity, and first of all, of course, asceticism, this being the indispensable conditions for the main purpose of Christianity: the uprooting of sinful passions and the implanting of Christian virtues.

We have before us, as an example, an official document of this sort, belonging to the Local Church of Serbia: the journal Theology, published by the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade (8th year, issues 1 and 2 for 1964). In this journal we find a lead article literally entitled: "The Necessity for the Codification and Publication of a New Collection of Canons of the Orthodox Church." The author of this article, while cunningly affirming that "the ideal principles of the Church will remain everywhere and always unchanging," nonetheless attempts to prove that the collection of canons of the Orthodox Church is only the product of a time long since passed into eternity, and therefore that it does not answer to the demands of contemporary life and must be abolished and replaced by another. This new collection of canons, observe, "must be brought into agreement with the fundamental principles of life," with which the Church supposedly "has always reckoned." "Out time," says this cunning author, " is different in many respects from the time of the Ecumenical Councils, at which these canons were composed, and therefore these canons cannot now be applied."

Let us look now and see precisely which canons it is that this modernist author considers obsolete and subject to abrogation:

— The 9th canon of the Holy Apostles, which demands that the faithful, after entering church, should remain at the Divine service to the end, and should not cause disorder by walking about the church.

— The 80th canon of the Council of Trullo, which punishes clergy by deposition, and laymen with excommunication, for failure to attend church for three successive Sundays without some important reason.

— The 24th canon of the Council of Trullo, which prohibits clergy and monks from visiting race tracks and other entertainments; to this canon the author adds the entirely naive, strange remark that it was only in earlier times that such amusements were places of depravity and vice, while now they are supposedly "centers of culture and education." (?!)

— The 54th canon of the Holy Apostles, which prohibits clergy, without unavoidable necessity, from entering a tavern; here again it somehow seems that previously the tavern was some different kind of establishment from what it is now.

— The 77th canon of the Council of Trullo and the 30th canon of the Council of Laodicea, which prohibit Christian men from bathing together with women; why it is necessary to acknowledge these canons too as "obsolete" is completely incomprehensible!

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— Th 96th canon of the Council of Trullo, which condemns artificial curling of the hair and in general all adornment of oneself with various kinds of finery "for the enticement of unstable souls" — instead of "adorning oneself with virtues and with good and pure morals"; this canon in our times, it would seem, has not only not become "obsolete," it has become especially imperative, if we call to mind the indecent, shameless women's fashions of today, which are completely unsuitable for Christian women.

This is sufficient for us to see what purpose it is that the aforementioned "reform" in our Orthodox Church has in view, with what aim there is proposed the convocation of an Eighth Ecumenical Council, about which all "modernists" so dream, already having a foretaste of the "carefree life" that will then be openly permitted and legitimized for all!

But let us reflect more deeply upon what is the terrible essence of all these demands for the abrogation of supposedly "obsolete" canonical rules. It is this: these contemporary church "reformers" who now so impudently raise their heads even in the bosom of our Orthodox Church itself (and terrible to say, their number includes not merely clergy, but even eminent hierarchs!) accept contemporary life with all its monstrous, immoral manifestations as an unshakable fact (which is, as we have seen above, not at all an Orthodox, but a heterodox, Western conception!), and they wish to abrogate all those canonical rules which precisely characterize Orthodoxy as an ascetic faith that calls to ascetic labor, in the name of the uprooting of sinful passions and the implanting of Christian virtues. This is a terrible movement, perilous for our Faith and Church; it wishes to cause, in the expression of Christ the Saviour, the salt to lose its savor; it is a movement directed toward the overthrow and annihilation of the true Church of Christ by means of the cunning substitution for it of a false church.

The above-mentioned article in the Serbian theological journal is still discreet, refraining from complete openness. It speaks of the permissibility in principle of marriage for bishops, but in life we hear ever more frequent and persistent talk of far worse — namely, of the supposed inapplicability in our times of all those canonical rules which demand of candidates to the priesthood and of priests themselves a pure and unblemished moral life; or, to speak more simply, of the permissibility for them of that erring depravity into the abyss of which contemporary mankind more and more plunges itself.

It is one thing to sin and repent, knowing and acknowledging that one is sinning and is in need of repentance and correction of life. It is something else again to legitimize lawlessness, to sanction sin, lulling thus one's conscience and thus abolishing the very foundations of the Church. To this we have no right, and it is most grievous crime before God, the Holy Church, and the souls of the faithful who seek eternal salvation.

And for how long, to what limits may we permit ourselves to go on such a slippery path, abrogating the Church canons which uphold Christian morality? Right now in America and, as we hear, in places also in other countries which have accepted contemporary "culture," there is increasing propaganda for the official abrogation of marriage and the legalization in place of marriage of "free love"; the use of contraceptive pills is being sanctioned for married couples, and even for the unmarried, since marriage supposedly has its purpose not the procreation of children, but "love"; legal recognition is being prepared for the heinous, unnatural passion of homosexuality, all the way to the establishment for homosexuals of a special church wedding rite (proposal of an Anglican bishop); etc., etc.

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And so? Should our Church too follow this fashionable path— "in step with the times," so as not to be left behind the march of life? But what kind of "church" will this be that will allow itself all this, or even merely look at it with all-forgiving condescension? It will be no longer a church at all, but a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah, which will not escape, sooner or later, the terrible chastisement of God.

We must not allow ourselves to be deluded and deceived, for we do not need such a "church," or rather "false church." We may ourselves be weak, and feeble, and we may often sin, but we will not allow the Church canons to be abrogated, for them it will become necessary to acknowledge the very Gospel of Christ, by which contemporary men do not wish to live as "obsolete," as "not answering to the spirit of the times," and abrogate it!

But the Gospel of Christ, together with all the canons of the Church, as well as the Church ordinances, outline for us that Christian ideal toward which we must strive if we desire for ourselves eternal salvation. We cannot allow a lowering of this ideal for the gratification of sinful passions and desires, a blasphemous abuse of these holy things.

Whatever "reforms" all these contemporary criminal "reformers" may desire, the truly-believing Orthodox Church consciousness cannot acknowledge or accept them. And whatever the apostates from true Orthodoxy, from the ascetic Faith, may do, we will not allow the modernization of our Church, and we will NOT go "in step with the times"!



St. Niphon Patriarch of Constantinople



The Holy and Righteous Simeon
holding Christ in his arms.

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Russian Orthodox people! Now is the time to speak everywhere, for all to hear, of those things which, because of false feelings of shame, many do not desire to speak of, which they fear to say to our evil age — an age of all kinds of concessions and compromises of our conscience.

Man has but two paths on earth: the path of truth or the path of falsehood, the path of life or the path of death, the path of salvation or the path of damnation. There is no middle path, no compromise between these two paths, nor can there be. Christ the Saviour came to earth specifically, according to His own words, to bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37), to show the people the way of truth, the way of life, the way of salvation. And the Church founded by Him, in the words of the holy Apostle, is "the pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim. 3:15). Therefore, in order to proceed along the path of truth, the path of life, the path of salvation faithfully, it is absolutely essential to belong to the Church founded by Christ the Saviour—not to those innumerable organizations of the present day that unlawfully and without any foundation have appropriated the name "church" for themselves, but to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church which, by keeping within itself that truth which was given it by Christ the Saviour Himself, preserves a firm, continuous bond with the holy Apostles and their lawful successors—the apostolic men and the holy Fathers.

As humans, we are all weak and infirm; we are all inclined toward sin; we all have the capacity to fall and to err. However, this in itself is not frightening, for the saving path of repentance to the path of salvation is through reunion with the Church from which we had fallen away by committing sin.

It is awful when we knowingly fall away from the truth, when we knowingly stand on the path of falsehood and build our entire life, all of our activity, on the foundation of a lie, flouting the truth of Christ which is preserved only by the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

That how Papal Rome embarked upon the path of falsehood, by starting to build its life and activities upon false premises, by proclaiming the lie that the holy Apostle Peter was the prince over the apostles, and that the pope of Rome, as his successor, was not merely a patriarch, equal in grace with all the rest of the bishops, but was the infallible vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. This lie was based on forged documents which have won for themselves in history the appellation "the False Decretals of Isidore." Equally false are all attempts to base this lie on Sacred Scripture, which so clearly testifies that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself severed at the root any aspiration towards supremacy among the apostles, inbuing them with the idea that they were all equal and brethren amongst themselves (cf. Matt. 20:20-27; 23:8-12). Accurately foreseeing the immeasurable self-exaltation of the Roman high priest, the holy Apostle wrote to the Romans, "to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3).

Thus Protestantism, too, with all innumerable sects to which it has given rise, has embarked upon the path of falsehood, proclaiming the lie that faith alone, without good works, is sufficient for salvation, and that each individual person, and not the Church, is the criterion of truth. Equally false are its attempts to found this falsehood on Sacred Scripture, despite the fact that, once and for all, the Lord Jesus Christ clearly stated, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 7:21), and it was to the Church in its all-embracing unity, and not to each

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individual believer, that He has given the promise: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), and that, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17), for "the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth" (I. Tim. 3:15).

Thus also the proponents of the "Living Church," the renovators, and all the self-reasoning modernists that have appeared within the Orthodox Church of late in great numbers, have embarked upon the path of falsehood, proclaiming the lie of the reconciling of the truth of Christ with the deceit of this world which lies in evil, completely forgetting the words of Christ, that Christians were to be people "not of this world" (John 15:19), and that the admonition of the Apostle — "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2) — is the sole renovation permitted and commanded us.

Thus also has the soviet "patriarchate," which has been set up in the Soviet Union by the godless communists, embarked upon the path of falsehood, proclaiming the lie that the God-hating bolshevik authority "is from God," even though the holy Apostle Paul (whose words they deceitfully cite) clearly states that the bearer of lawful authority "is a minister of God" who encourages good and punished evil (Rom. 13:3-4), and not an atheist who acts to the contrary, as we see with the bolsheviks, whose authority this "patriarchate" deceitfully praises and propagandizes throughout the world, attempting by these means to lead all mankind astray.

Thus also have all the "neo-Christians and neo-renovators" embarked upon the path of falsehood — they who, at the instigation of the godless ones and the servants of the powers of darkness, have placed themselves outside the one Russian Church Abroad, who have rejected a thousand years of patristic tradition and replaced it with their own sophistries, forgetting the exhortation of the holy Apostle: "Brethren beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8), and his warning: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane babblings and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (I Tim. 6:20-21). And truly, in these preachers of the "vain babblings of knowledge falsely so called" the prophecy of the great Apostle has been fulfilled: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3-4).

For many, the most terrible and seductive deception of our times is the toleration of compromise or conciliation between truth and falsehood, the pursuit of the "golden mean" between them, the attempt to reconcile and unite the irreconcilable and incompatible, the serving of God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, light and darkness.... Hence the "eastern rite, so insistently thrust upon us by the papists; hence "ecumenism," so urgently propagandized by the Protestants and the renegades from Orthodoxy that have sold themselves out to them; hence the contempt for the ascetic institutions of the Church, for the teachings and traditions of the Fathers; hence the theatricals, drinking parties and all sorts of entertainments within the church compounds, the organizing of amusements "for charitable purposes" on the eves of Church feast-days and Sundays; hence more and more other things in the life of contemporary Christians which it would take years to recount. And all the falsehood, with shameless insolence, dares to pose as the truth, calling white black and black white. Raging unrestrained and with malice against the genuine truth,

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by this very action it unmasks itself; this is not evident only to those who are completely blinded by it.

Nevertheless, there is but one path of truth, and it does not acknowledge, not does it countenance any compromise, any concessions with falsehood, for every such compromise, by whatever specious pretext it was achieved, is a betrayal of the truth. Let those who have rejected the truth and given themselves over to falsehood call us arrogant who value the truth and sincerely desire to walk the path of truth. We should neither fear nor be shamed by this. We do not pride ourselves on our own personal righteousness, our own personal virtue, our own personal merits and good works of any sort. We realize that in our own personal lives we are weak, infirm and sinful people. And if there is anything of which we can boast, we boast not of ourselves, but of the Orthodox Faith, "the pure and undefiled Bride of Christ, the Church of Christ, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27), to which we belong, and membership in which we cherish more than anything else on earth. We do not praise ourselves, but boast because the Word of God teaches us to boast: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:31), "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:4). All the Christian martyrs boasted of their membership in the right Faith and the Church of Christ before the pagan persecutors; the holy Fathers of the Church and all the champions and followers of the true Faith boasted before the apostate heretics. Contending for the holy Truth even to the shedding of their blood, they did not in the least consider their steadfastness and devotion to the true Faith and Church to be pride. They did not see this as reprehensible pride or lack of humility, but on the contrary they saw it as their sacred duty before God and their personal conscience. Generally speaking, what manner of "humility" can there be in the face of falsehood? In this thought alone is there not a most terrible lie which cries out to Heaven?

This is why, following the instruction of the Word of God and the example of the confessors of our holy Faith of all times and nationalities, we boast of our Russian Church Abroad and of our membership in it, for until the present time it still preserves the truth of Holy Orthodoxy inviolate, and has neither entered into any agreement, compromise or negotiation with the enemies of our Faith, the godless atheists, the open and secret servants of the powers of darkness and their lackeys.

But taking this into account, of course, we must not, we dare not forget to what this binds us. Woe! Woe unto those of us who, falling into the various kinds of sin and vice which are characteristic of human frailty, stagnate in them, not bringing quick and sincere repentance for them and not correcting their life! Such people are preparing all the more condemnation for themselves, who, belonging to the True Church, have not taken care in their own personal lives to walk by the path of Christ's truth. Their sin is redoubled because they cause others to stumble, alienating both those who belong to the Church from it as well as those who have fallen away from it.

Thus, not troubled by any slanders or false rumors, let us manfully stand in the truth. Decisively rejecting all compromises with falsehood, all modernism and libertine rationalism on questions of faith, all innovations contrary to the spirit of our Holy Faith, let us believe and confess as did the apostles' successors, the holy martyrs, the holy universal teachers and hierarchs, the venerable ascetic who glorified themselves by their great struggles

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of prayer and fasting, the entire assembly of the saints who have shone forth in the Russian land, our evermemorable and righteous Father John of Kronstadt* and the great pillars, teachers and instructors of our Russian Church closest to us in point of time, who still await official glorification — the Optina startsi, Bishop Ignatius (Brianchaninov) and Bishop Theophanes the Recluse, who have expounded their teachings to us in a manner identical to the ancient pillars of our Church in spirit, holiness of life and the inspiration of their teaching.

Let us remember that, according to the words of the apostolic Father, the Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, "If anyone follows after him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Philadelphians 1:9), and according to the words of the great universal teacher St. John Chrysostom, "A sin, such as division of the Church, cannot be absolved even by the blood of martyrdom."

So let us endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) with the entire Heavenly Church and with all who keep faith in it on earth, and "the peace of God shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).

May the Lord confirm and strengthen us in this truth, the Faith of St. Vladimir, and may He lead back those who are estranged from it.

Translated by:

Sub-Deacon Alexander Bohush &
Brother Isaac Lambertson



ST. GREGORY PALAMAS, ST. PHOTIOS THE GREAT
AND ST. MARK OF EPHEBUS

* This sermon by Archbishop Averky was written before the canonization of St. John of Kronstadt.

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